its ranks. The mistrust engendered by the cowardly assaults of anonymous and irresponsible slander, by the attempt at filching, not the trash of lucre, but the good name of those who were systematically subjected to these assaults, had become widely spread in the metropolis, and but for the moral force opposed to the system by the association, would have rapidly extended its baneful effects to the provinces. We say that for the check given to these base practices, the profession is indebted to the moral force of the association. Neither the open and fearless manner in which, at one of its early meetings, Mr. Crosse of Norwich exposed the cummies and denounced the system, nor the manner in which this act of self-devotion on his part was responded to by the numerous influential body then assembled, will readily be forgotten. The members of the association need not be told that Mr. Crosse, as well as the society, became, from that period, marked objects of attack. The weapon, however, was blunted and its force broken; the unprincipled attacks from that time unsparingly and recklessly made, failed of their effect, and the association prospered, in defiance of every misrepresentation and falsehood which were thrown out against it. The history of these transactions is highly instructive; the shifting and doubling displayed in the attacks, the utter disregard to truth in the statements advanced, the varied arts by which it was attempted to lower and injure the association in general estimation, are worthy of exposure. Possibly, should occasion call for it, we may be tempted to recur to these proceedings more fully. At present, however, it suffices to point out the claims of the association to the estimation of the profession, as a powerful instrument for good, as a means not only of advancing knowledge, but also of supporting the respectability and honour of its members, and of maintaining that union which alone constitutes strength.

CLINICAL OBSERVATIONS ON STAMMERING.

By M. AMUSSAT.

M. AMUSSAT, one of the first surgeons who practised in France the operation for the cure of stammer, has recently delivered his opinions on this subject before a number of French and foreign medical men, amongst whom were MM. Textor, Jaeger, Starck, Dr. Oliffe, &c.

After having shown that it was now generally admitted, both in France and foreign countries, that the operation should be abandoned, M. Amussat pointed out the reason of this, and attributed it not only to the danger of the operation, but chiefly to the fact of the return of the impediment after operation. His principal object, on the

present occasion, was to restore the confidence of medical men, by showing that the causes of relapse might be obviated.

The operation of M. Amussat consists in dividing certain membranous or muscular attachments of the tongue to the lower jaw; this operation is almost always immediately successful in the first instance; but as the parts become healed, the stammer generally returns, and hence the discredit into which the operation has fallen. But it seemed to M. Amussat that great benefit might be attained by preventing the reunion of the divided tissues, and, after various attempts, he thinks that he has attained his object, and thus rendered the operation much more certain in its results.

M. Amussat was led to his present ideas by reflecting on what takes place in cases where the meatus urinarius has been enlarged. For example, when the meatus has been enlarged by division of the glans penis, the divided parts have a strong tendency to unite, in spite of the passage of urine, or the introduction of the largest bougies. But if the surgeon counteracts this tendency by lightly cauterising the inferior angle of the wound, or simply by destroying from time to time the cicatrix, the edges of the wound are covered with a pellicle, granulations spring up, and the orifice remains dilated. This principle M. Amussat has applied to the operation for stammer. The following is an example:—

— Morton, 25 years of age, stammers in a very great degree, with contortion of the muscles of the face. The father of this patient also laboured under an impediment of speech, and two of his brothers likewise. The tongue deviates slightly towards the left side, and is with difficulty brought up towards the nose; he cannot touch the arch of the palate with it; the frenum is large, and becomes very tense whenever the tongue is raised.

On the 22nd of May, M. Amussat performed the following operation:—The tongue being elevated, he commenced by extirpating the frenum altogether, with the scissors. This produced considerable improvement in the power of speaking; it was, however, thought prudent to remove the fibrous sheath of the muscles, in order to give them full liberty of action; the patient now spoke, almost without hesitation, and the distortion of the countenance had disappeared. This satisfactory state continued until the cicatrisation of the wounds was nearly complete; the stammer now returned, and though it was less severe, still was enough to constitute a complete relapse: on examining the tongue, it was evident that the frenum had been replaced by a firm cicatrix, which offered an equal obstacle to the free motions of the tongue. M. Amussat was desirous of immediately applying, in this case, the principle already alluded to, but as he had not definitively settled on the mode of preventing cicatrisation, he resolved to defer it to another occasion.

On the 27th of August, the state of the patient was again examined; he now stammered as much as before, but the impediment was unattended with contortion of the muscles of the face. M. Amussat divided, by a semi-circular incision behind the lower jaw, the attachment of the frenum and membranous parts immediately below it, down to the genio-glossi muscles. The improvement in speaking was at once evident. The patient was

now regularly visited every two days; M. Amussat frequently resected the edges of the wound, so as to prevent the formation of a cicatrix. By this means, and by placing a piece of charpie, supported by a leaden compress, between the edges of the wound, cicatrization was prevented, and a considerable space obtained between the insertion of the frenum and the jaw. The improvement of this patient is every day more and more evident, and M. Amussat hopes that he will eventually obtain a radical cure. Several other cases of a similar kind are related by M. Amussat, but as sufficient time to determine the reality of the cure has not elapsed, we abstain from noticing them here.

M. Amussat insists particularly on the point, that relapses after the operation for stammer chiefly occur in consequence of the reunion of the parts which have been divided; it is very difficult to prevent this union by the ordinary means. The principle on which M. Amussat endeavours to impede immediate cicatrization has been already pointed out; the slight union which takes place by the second or third day after the operation, may be destroyed by pushing back the tongue, &c., breaking up the soft membrane which unites the edges of the wound; but it will be found more simple and sure to pass a cutting instrument between the edges, and then introduce the end of the little finger to search for any bands or adhesions that may have been formed; the mouth having been washed out, a small piece of lint, bound in the middle with a thread, is now introduced to the bottom of the wound; the thread is drawn out between the teeth, and the whole supported by a leaden compress; the latter bears the form of the lower jaw on which it is moulded. It is absolutely necessary to attend to these circumstances, if we desire the cure to be permanent; for the stammer must return if the divided parts become united.—*Gazette des Hôpitaux*, No. 114.

BENEVOLENT FUNDS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—In transmitting, through you, the amount of my subscription to the Medical and Surgical Association, I take the opportunity of making a few observations upon one or two points connected with that association, which from time to time have claimed my attention. I must apologise for giving you this trouble, at the same time it leads me to remark, that as we have now so convenient an organ of communication with each other in your excellent journal, and as facilities of postage are equally favourable to the plan, it would lessen the labour of the secretaries, if you were annually to publish a list of those subscribers who have, as well as those who have not, paid up their subscriptions. In this way the whole statement might be brought at once before every member, and the annual period for payment might be concentrated within a given time, the Transactions and Weekly Journal being withheld in all those cases where the subscriptions have not been forwarded at the time appointed.

I also avail myself of this opportunity of conveying to the Benevolent Fund my mite of sup-

port, which I am anxious should be considered as an annual subscription. I cannot, however, let the occasion pass in silence, so anxious I am to relieve the distressing difficulties which surround so many of my poorer professional brethren. The important fact made known at the York meeting, by Mr. Newnham of Farnham, that nearly one-half of the subscriptions and donations of the past year were those of two individuals, is one that ought not to pass by unnoticed. Whatever may be the multifarious causes which have been, and are still, operating to depress the general practitioners of this country, a body of men, whom Dr. Caspar's tables show, have their lives shortened, and their comforts entrenched upon, to so fearful an extent as to have no parallel, it appears to me there is no subject before the association of more paramount importance, or requiring more urgent attention. Surely, to avert such an evil as this, the great energy of the association ought to be directed, and no way is better calculated to lessen the demands upon the Benevolent Fund than by endeavouring to remove those difficulties which arise out of our legally unprotected state. But it is to relieve present difficulties that the utility of a benevolent fund is more especially apparent, and when all has been done to remove the causes now operating unfavourably upon the prospects of the general practitioner, there must yet remain a large number of persons who may be called the legitimate claimants of the fund; such are those who have become impoverished by accidents or disease. It is impossible to look over the list of those who have enrolled themselves members of this association, comprising a body of some thirteen hundred of the medical profession, without seeing there many names of professional brothers, whose long and successful career has placed them in positions of affluence and honour. These are the individuals who ought to have been seen heading a list of liberal donations, in order to accumulate, in the first instance, a fund sufficiently large to meet the most pressing demands, and which will take years of five shilling subscriptions to collect.

In former times, if we gather our information from the classics, the profession stood at an elevation infinitely higher than it does at present. "In nulla re propius homines accedunt ad deos, quam salutatem hominibus dando." If in the days of Cicero we took so high a station in the estimation of our fellow-creatures, we ought at least, in the nineteenth century, to try to take our rank among men. Can this be the case while we make such a deplorable disclosure, that out of thirteen hundred men, of all ranks of a profession that ought to stand high, if education and wealth will place them there, not two hundred pounds could be scraped together for the purpose of relieving our distressed brethren? Are we entitled to the rank we claim among men, while we allow butchers and fishmongers, and almost every other description of tradesmen, to form themselves into rich companies for mutual aid?—to build and endow almshouses, to educate the children of their poorer brothers in the trade, and to bestow their abilities and their money upon other charitable purposes in connexion with their business?

But space will not allow me to say more upon this point, as I wish to add a few words upon the subject of other evils which are closely connected